

Return on Investment Program Funding Application For FY 2013

Agency Specific IT project

Date: September 1, 2011
Agency Name: Iowa College Student Aid Commission
Project Name: Workstations for Learning and Educational Advisory Center
Agency Manager: Karen Misjak, Executive Director
Contact Info: (515) 725-3410, Karen.Misjak@iowa.gov
Executive Sponsor: Karen Misjak, Executive Director

Amount of Funding Requested: \$18,400

Section I: Project Description

The Iowa College Student Aid Commission seeks Iowa ROI program support to address unique agency-specific responsibilities for promoting postsecondary education access and affordability. The mission of the Iowa College Student Aid Commission (also called Iowa College Aid) is to advocate for and provide a continuum of services to support Iowa students and families as they explore and finance educational opportunities beyond high school. In addition, as the agency designated by the state's governor to administer federal GEAR UP and College Access Challenge grants, Iowa College Aid is responsible for providing career exploration, early college planning, and college financial aid to students throughout Iowa.

Iowa College Aid seeks to provide instruction and educational advisory services to the general public in a learning and educational opportunity center. The center will provide services to high school students and to members of the general public, particularly low-income populations in central Iowa. While the agency has identified other potential sources of financial support for staffing, space, and other costs, the agency seeks ROI funding for substantial aspects of the center's technology needs. Iowa College Aid seeks Iowa ROI support for web connectivity, software, and hardware for 20 computer workstations.

Governor Branstad's leadership agenda seeks to increase family income in the state by 25 percent and to restore Iowa's educational system to #1 in the nation. Facilitating access to postsecondary education for low-income and first-generation college-going students and families is a meaningful approach to effecting these policy goals. Consistent with both the agency's mission and state-level strategic objectives, the project is also a major component of the agency's IT strategic plan. As a unique format for delivery of services, the project represents an innovative new program for the agency. At the same time, however, the project relies on proven and accepted technology solutions that will serve the agency and its constituencies well into the future.

Section II: Expected Results

Iowa College Aid will develop an instructional and educational advisory center to promote awareness of educational opportunities, help recruit students into postsecondary options and, by reinforcing academic readiness, financial aid awareness, financial literacy, and career planning, ultimately support postsecondary educational attainment. The center will provide space for meeting with clients and providing instruction and educational advising in one-on-one and group settings. The center will provide access to online and computerized resources in a setting supported by educational consultants and advisors.

As indicated in Section I, Iowa College Aid seeks ROI funding to support key IT-related aspects of the instructional and advisory center. The ROI investment shall substantially contribute to the development of this instructional and educational advisory center by furnishing networked computers and facilitating access to online resources. The center will serve at least 1,000 people annually. ROI grant funds will be used to establish infrastructure for computerized and web-based services to participants at a cost of \$3.68 per participant per year for five years.

The networked computers located in the center will provide users with access to computer-based informational tools, including:

- college awareness and academic preparation, including development of personal graduation plans;
- information on postsecondary opportunities;
- standardized testing and test preparation;
- online college admissions applications;
- financial aid information, including Iowa scholarship and grant programs and scholarship sources;
- career planning and decision making tools, including interest inventories;
- financial literacy software, including the Iowa Financial Literacy Program;
- *I Have A Plan Iowa*, a web portal developed by Iowa College Aid to support college awareness, planning, and preparation.

Iowa College Aid also administers several grant-funded programs that share the common goal of increasing college access for low-income, minority, and underrepresented groups. These include Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) and the College Access Challenge Grant. The governor of Iowa designated Iowa College Aid as the agency responsible for implementing these grant-funded activities. Completion of the project will be supported by ongoing agency processes, and will support the achievement of the agency's mission.

Section III: Financial Analysis

The networked workstations for which ROI support is requested will provide access to online resources in a setting that also includes in-person support by educational consultants and advisors. The proposed investment provides an efficient mechanism for the delivery of information and services to the constituencies to be served by the center.

An ROI program investment will result in agency cost savings as a result of greater efficiencies achieved by having a single location to host education and advising services; i.e., will reduce travel costs and technology overhead of alternative approaches. Nevertheless, the proposed center represents a new and innovative approach on the part of Iowa College Aid to address the needs of its constituencies in a manner for which there are few or no viable alternatives.

The agency will provide support for staffing, space rental, web hosting, and other costs associated with the center. Total agency savings amount to \$43,400.

Estimates of financial benefits are based on the project description provided in Section I of this document. More importantly, the project will result in value to the constituencies who will be served.

Project costs:

- | | |
|--|----------|
| • 20 computer workstations (\$820/workstation) | \$16,400 |
| • networking hardware and installation | \$2,000 |

Agency savings:

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| • cost of project | \$18,400 |
| • approximate cost of staff time and travel to deliver these services at off-site locations to 1,000 people per year throughout the center's anticipated service region at \$5000 per year | \$25,000 |
| • Total Agency Savings | \$43,400 |

Section IV: Auditable Outcome Measures

Auditable metrics of implementation include the following:

1. Improved customer service

The networked workstations will provide greater accessibility to online resources in a setting supported by educational consultants and advisors.

2. Citizen impact

As part of an instructional and educational advising center, the ROI program investment will help to achieve the following objectives:

- The center will serve at least 1,000 people per year.
- 100% of participants for whom the measure is applicable will apply for college financial aid.
- 70% of participants for whom the measure is applicable will apply for postsecondary education admission.

3. Cost Savings

Cost savings are detailed in the financial analysis table. We anticipate that an ROI program investment will result in agency cost savings as a result of efficiencies described under Section III of this proposal. The agency will provide support for staffing, rental, web hosting, and other costs. Total agency savings amount to \$ 43,400.

4. Project reengineering

The proposed investment provides an efficient mechanism for the delivery of information and services to the constituencies to be served by the center.

5. Source of funds (Budget %)

Without Iowa ROI program investment, the agency will seek alternative sources, including external grant funding. In lieu of ROI funding, the agency will likely forgo some or all aspects of project design described in this proposal.

6. Tangible/Intangible benefits

Networked workstations will provide meaningful access to online resources in a setting supported by educational consultants and advisors. Less tangibly, the assistance and information facilitated by the requested resources can yield substantial long-term benefits to participants in the form of college attainment, access to college financial aid, greater financial literacy, and career success.

Data Sources

- Number of participants completing an application for college financial aid.
- Number of participants completing at least one application for postsecondary admission.
- Aggregated data from the *I Have A Plan Iowa* web system, including:
 - number of participants maintaining a graduation plan and portfolio on *I Have A Plan Iowa* web portal;
 - number of accounts created by users in the instructional and advisory center;
 - measures of account activity for *I Have A Plan Iowa* accounts associated with the center.

Enclosure: Enclosure 1 Financial Analysis Iowa College Student Aid Commission FY13

Enclosure One, Financial Analysis Spreadsheet to Return on Investment (ROI) Program Funding Application						
Agency Name: Iowa College Student Aid Commission						
Application Name: Workstations for Learning and Educational Advisory Center						
Table One: Estimated Project Cost						
	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	
Development and Implementation Costs	\$18,400	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Recurring Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Total Costs	\$18,400	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Table Two: Percentage of Costs From						
General Fund	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Federal or other funding	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Pooled Technology Fund	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Table Three: Projected Reduction in Expense						
For Requesting Agency	\$23,400	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	
For Other State Agencies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
TOTAL Cost Reductions	\$23,400	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	
Table Four: Calculated Estimated Return on Investment						
Total projected cost from table one	\$18,400	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$18,400
Total projected cost reductions from table three	\$23,400	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$43,400
Projected Net Benefit to the State of Iowa	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$25,000